

# RIO GRANDE SUN



## News

### High School Locked Down

By Chris McGuinness and Bill Rogers  
SUN Staff

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Española Valley High School was locked down for three hours Sept. 9 after an anonymous caller claiming to be a student's parents phoned the school at 9:45 a.m. Claiming a student was coming to the school with a gun, police said.

Española parents were informed though an e-mail sent by Assistant Superintendent of Operations Fidel Trujillo, which explained the school had received a call that "raised potential safety concerns." The e-mail was sent shortly after 11 a.m., roughly two hours after the lock down was initiated.

While the District waited to inform parents of the lock down, many students got the news out themselves via text messages to parents and friends.

"A lot of my friends have been texting me, they are all saying they been in class a long time and that they can't even leave to go to the bathroom," Senior Thomas Alboe, 18, said.

Alboe said he was late coming to school and didn't know what was happening while he was kept outside the school's gates by security guards, who told him he was not allowed to come inside.

"They wouldn't let me in, then I got a call from my mom and she said not to go to school because someone called in a threat," Alboe said.

During the lock down, students were confined to their classrooms and were not allowed to leave. All entrances to the school were closed while Española Police conducted a classroom by classroom search.

"The security guards and cops came into each classroom and searched us," High School freshman Adriana Martinez wrote in an e-mail to the Rio Grande SUN following the lock down. "They made us empty our backpacks. One cop told us there was a report of a gun on campus."

The school remained on lock down through lunch. Superintendent Janette Archuleta said food was brought to students in the classrooms as they waited for the lock down to end.

Students were held in class until 12:40 p.m. when the lock down ended and they were able to attend their sixth period class before going home for the day.

"We only went to three classes," Martinez wrote. "First, second and sixth (periods)."

Española Police Sgt. Richard Gallegos said no weapons were found during the search of the students on campus.

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(SUNfoto by Chris McGuinness) Parents' cars line up outside the gates of Española Valley High School Sept. 9 after the school was locked down following an anonymous call to school security that a student was bringing a gun to school. During the lock down, which lasted from 9:45 a.m. until 12:40 p.m., students were not allowed to leave class while police conducted a room by room search of the campus.



Police connected the Sept. 9 threat to freshman student Billy Jones, 15, of Ohkay Owingeh, who was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital Sept. 7 for a psychological evaluation Sept. 7 after he was found with a hit list, Gallegos said.

"It's not that we want to file charges against him, but we charged him hoping the judge would get to see him and order him to get some kind of treatment," Española Police Lt. Christian Lopez said. "He's not a bad kid; he just needs help."

District Attorney Angela Pacheco dropped the charges against Jones and the teen has been released from custody.

"There was no evidence to substantiate the charges," Pacheco said.

Lopez said he plans to file a report on Jones with the Juvenile Probation Office, which will conduct its own investigation and, Lopez hopes, get Jones the counseling he needs.

But Gallegos said police do not have evidence connecting him to the anonymous telephone call that kept the high school on lock down.

School resource officer Danny Pacheco called 911 emergency dispatch just before 4 p.m. Sept. 7 to report Jones was found with the hit list and a psychiatrist was requesting to have him evaluated at a hospital. Gallegos said the list had 13 names of students on it, as well as five crayon drawings depicting people being shot in the head and tombstones with names of students written on them.

Some of the names on the list are nicknames such as "Pink Whore," "Special Blonde" or "Fat Ass." Other students, like Jolene Benson and Chris D. Trujillo, were named specifically, according to the report.

The police report states Jones told the police that names on the list were people who "bugged" him and that the drawing was from a movie he wanted to make.

Gallegos said he and tribal police attempted to arrest Jones at his home Wednesday for making threats, but the teen and his mother were not home.

When asked if he thought he could hurt someone or himself, Jones responded he didn't know, according to the report.

"I don't know," Jones allegedly told police when they asked if he thought he might kill himself. "Sometimes I think that's the only way out."

The police report goes on to state Jones was then sent to St. Vincent Hospital for a psychiatric evaluation, but escaped from the facility the next day (Sept. 8) with the help of his mother, Cecilia Jones, who had picked him up.

The police report ends with a statement claiming staff at the high school was afraid that Jones might act out what he had written or drawn and had the opportunity and means to do so, and it was due to those fears that the school was locked down.

Billy Jones was out of school Sept. 9 at the time of the lock down and Gallegos said the police do not have any other evidence that Jones was going to bring a gun to school.

Gallegos said it was possible the tip was a rumor, but he saw the hit list as a warning sign.

"There's potential for him to get ahold of a deadly weapon and use it," Gallegos said.

No weapon was found on Jones and as of Tuesday police had not searched Billy Jones's house.

Gallegos said they also checked to see if Jones was in school and asked the tribal police for help looking for Jones. Gallegos said he had a tip Jones was at counseling at Ayudantes on North Riverside Drive. Gallegos made the arrest at 11:38 a.m. Jones was with his mother, Gallegos said.

This was not the first time Billy Jones was accused of making violent threats against others. The Sept. 9 police report states Cecilia Jones told officers her son placed his hands around her throat and grabbed

her arms two weeks prior after she told him to take a bath and get ready for school the next day.

An incident report taken by Española Police officer Danny Pacheco (prior to his position as SRO at the high school) March 2 states a female student at the Española Military Academy said Billy Jones told her she was on a hit list and that he was, "going to bring a knife and gun and was going to kill her".

Billy Jones denied he had threatened to kill the girl but did have a list of "good and bad" students he felt he should or should not associate with, the report states.

After speaking with both students, Pacheco said he did not take any action because he did not feel Billy Jones was going to hurt any students, according to the report.

Gallegos said Billy Jones was new to the district after his mother moved here from Georgia. He was having problems fitting in at school, Gallegos said.

In January, Billy Jones was assaulted by another student while riding the bus to school. The police report, taken by Española Police Officer Ernie Romero, states that another student, Kyle Abeyta, sat behind Billy Jones and began kicking his seat. When Billy Jones tried to get the boy to stop Abeyta began punching him in the head and face repeatedly, report states.

According to the report, Billy Jones was unable to defend himself and told Police he put his head down so he would not get hit in the face.

Gallegos described Billy Jones as quiet, but troubled.

"To me this kid was like a walking time bomb," Gallegos said.

State District Court Judge Michael Vigil will be hearing the case, Gallegos said, but Vigil's staff did not have Jones on the court docket as of Tuesday.

Cecilia Jones did not return calls seeking comment.

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